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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 001724

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STATE PASS AIT/W

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CH](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: KMT VICE CHAIR CHIANG SEEKS USG HELP IN FORGING  
CROSS-STRAIT CONSENSUS

Classified By: AIT Director Douglas Paal, Reason: 1.4 (B/D)

11. (C) Summary: KMT Vice Chairman P.K. Chiang urged the USG to intervene in public and private to urge the Chen administration and KMT leadership to cooperate on cross-strait policy. Chiang, who provided the Director a readout of his recent trip to the Mainland, expressed concern that mounting domestic political acrimony over the recent KMT-CCP contacts may undermine prospects for progress in cross-strait relations. Chiang said he would urge KMT Chairman Lien Chan to meet with President Chen Shui-bian before Lien's upcoming visit to Beijing and asked AIT to encourage the Chen government to create a positive atmosphere for such a meeting. Chiang acknowledged the risk of the KMT facilitating PRC "united front" tactics, but said that if Lien could travel to Beijing with President Chen's blessing, his visit could serve as a major boost for Chen, Lien, and, most importantly, the people of Taiwan. AIT will continue to reinforce the need for cooperation with leaders on both sides of the partisan divide. We also concur with Chiang's suggestion of continued USG public statements to build on the helpful April 6 HIRC testimony given by EAP DAS Schriver. End Summary.

12. (C) KMT Vice Chairman P.K. Chiang, accompanied by former TECRO Washington Rep. Ding Mou-shih, hosted the AIT Director to lunch April 11 to provide a readout on his late March visit to Beijing (Septel) and discuss growing domestic political tensions over the KMT's ongoing contacts with the PRC. Chiang emphasized that his purpose for leading the KMT delegation to Beijing was not to usurp the government's authority to conduct cross-strait negotiations, but rather to create a positive atmosphere for officials on the two sides to move ahead on economic and other exchanges that would improve the livelihood of the Taiwan people. Chiang said that it was in this spirit that he personally delivered a detailed readout of his visit to Premier Frank Hsieh. Chiang added that it would be tragic if the partisan bickering that grew out of his March visit ended up undermining prospects for improved cross-strait relations.

Chen-Lien Meeting Critical  
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13. (C) Chiang said he was fully aware of the sophistication of Beijing's "united front" tactics, and stated that it was not in the KMT's interests to fall into their trap. Chiang said that a domestic consensus, with support from the government, was a precondition for any real progress in cross-strait relations. In this context, Chiang said he would encourage KMT Chairman Lien Chan to meet with President Chen Shui-bian before traveling to Beijing later in the year. Chiang asserted that without the President's support, Lien's visit would be largely meaningless. However, if Lien could talk to Beijing with the President's blessing, Chiang said the visit could achieve a "win-win-win" for Lien, Chen, and, most importantly, the Taiwan people. Chiang added that a Chen-Lien meeting should not only be limited to discussing Lien's Beijing trip, but should also provide a forum for the two leaders to discuss the range of issues, including economic policy and Legislative Yuan (LY) action on the special defense procurement budget. Chiang cautioned that without a Chen-Lien meeting, passage of any major legislation in the current LY session may be difficult.

Fear and Loathing in Taipei  
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14. (C) Chiang noted, however, that prospects for a Chen-Lien summit are complicated by the deep level of mutual distrust and increasingly strident rhetoric emanating from both camps. Chiang bemoaned the negative language Chen employed in his April 9 speech inviting Lien to meet (Note: on April 9, Chen offered to meet with Lien and even endorse his Beijing visit, but in the next breath he accused Lien of only caring about China, not Taiwan. End Note). Chiang acknowledged that his own party has its hard-liners as well. He added that many of Lien's advisors are urging him not to respond to Chen's offer to meet, recalling the negative experience of Lien's last meeting with Chen in 2001 over the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant.

U.S. Can Play a Critical Role  
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15. (C) In this context, Chiang urged the USG to employ a mix of public and private messages to encourage Taiwan's political leaders to work towards a consensus. Ambassador Ding commented that while the April 6 testimony by EAP DAS Schriver was helpful, the Taiwan media either underplayed the story or distorted Schriver's comments. Ding suggested that repeated, clear messages about the importance for domestic consensus and cross-Strait engagement would help create a more positive domestic atmosphere. Chiang also asked AIT to urge President Chen to "tone down" the public language he has been using towards the KMT in order to preserve room for future contacts.

Comment: Fostering Moderation

16. (C) President Chen's April 9 "offer" to endorse Lien's visit notwithstanding, neither side shows much appetite for conciliation. Voices of moderation like Chiang's are in short supply, and hard-liners on both sides are actively twisting past USG policy statements to advance their own partisan agendas. To counter this trend, AIT will continue to privately press leaders in both political camps to move towards a cross-Strait policy consensus and explore opportunities for public diplomacy. AIT has already widely disseminated the text of DAS Schriver's remarks. We endorse Chiang's suggestion for further public statements out of Washington. If some sort of domestic consensus can be achieved ahead of Lien's visit, it could potentially facilitate the first real progress in cross-Strait relations in almost seven years. However, if the two sides fail to move beyond partisan gamesmanship, it may result in yet another long-period of legislative gridlock and cross-Strait policy inertia.

PAAL